



UNC  
KIDNEY CENTER

Podcast Transcript:  
Dr. Ron Falk  
ANCA Vasculitis Treatments  
“ANCA Treatments: Sterility”

Patient: I’m young and would like to start a family some day. Does Cytoxan cause sterility in some patients?

Dr. Falk: Cytoxan absolutely can cause ovarian failure in women and probably loss of sperm in men. In patients with lupus, another kind of autoimmune disease, the National Institute of Health looked at the side effects of Cytoxan and ovarian failure most carefully. In their series, they had many women who had ovarian failure. The same was true in the National Institute of Health studies with Wegener’s Granulomatosis. So in some case series, up to 40 percent of people on long-term oral cyclophosphamide can have ovarian failure. Or, premature loss of ovarian function. In other words, menopause early on.

The goal of avoiding ovarian failure are two things: one, if one has to be on Cytoxan, to use it for the shortest amount of time possible. Or, to essentially put one’s ovaries to sleep with a drug called leuprolide acetate, or Lupron, which has to be used before Cytoxan is started. Again, to use to the smallest amount of drug, probably by giving it by vein rather than by mouth, just to decrease the total exposure to Cytoxan.

Patient: If you’re male, should you think about sperm banking?

Dr. Falk: Excellent question. Absolutely—before you ever receive Cytoxan, if you’re a male, you should bank sperm, and probably more than just one time, in an effort to really make sure there are plenty of sperm available for in vitro fertilization.

Patient: If you’re a woman, there’s IVF, should she consider that as well as the Lupron, or will the Lupron be enough?

Dr. Falk: Lupron has been pretty effective. The problem with Lupron is that most patients don’t have the time to get Lupron. Or, quite frankly to get eggs harvested before therapy is started. So, to a certain

extent, the severity of the disease is triggering rapid use of Cytoxan, making much more difficult these protective strategies. So the best approach is, as soon as the disease is under control, to decrease the amount of Cytoxan, or to stop it and substitute it with another drug.

